

# Report of the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017

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## Subject:

Independent Monitoring and Quality Assurance of Children's Homes, Regulation 44.

## Summary statement:

The report aims to inform of the process of Independent Monitoring of Children's Homes (*Regulation 44 Independent person: visits and reports*) and recognise the role of Elected Member in visits to Residential Children's Homes.

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**Portfolio:**

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**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Children's Services**



## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report aims to inform of the process of Independent Monitoring of Children's Homes (**Regulation 44 Independent person: visits and reports**) and recognise the role and impact of Elected Member in visits to Residential Homes.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The report highlights change and the impact following the introduction of Children's Homes (England) Regulation 2015 including the Quality Standards Guide and the inspection framework for Ofsted, which came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

## 3. REPORT ISSUES

- 3.1 Statutory requirements are set out for each Registered Person to ensure that an Independent Person visits the children's home at least once a month. The Children's Homes Regulations (CHR) 2015 set specific requirements for the independent monitoring and quality assurance of children's homes which includes;

- To interview in private; the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires;
- Inspect the premises of the home;
- Inspect the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.

- 3.2 Following each Regulation 44 monitoring visit the Independent Person must produce a report about a visit ("the Independent Person's Report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether

- Children are effectively safeguarded
- The conduct of the home promotes children's wellbeing

The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to;

- **Registered Person** - regulations are drafted to make the registered person "accountable" for the management of the home
- **Service Manager** – there are two Service Managers responsible for managing of the residential and respite provisions (Liz Perry – Residential Children's Homes and Gareth Flemyng – Disability & Respite Provisions)
- **Responsible Individual** – the Group Service Manager for Resources takes responsibility for supervising the homes on behalf of the organisation
- **Ofsted**

- 3.3 Reports demonstrate a robust approach to independent monitoring which provides an overview of the running of the home. The report captures areas of good practice which demonstrates compliance with Children's Homes Regulations and Guide to Quality Standards.

The Independent Persons report also highlights areas which require attention by the Registered Person to develop / improve the service delivered. Requirements set identify the action to be taken to demonstrate compliance with Children's Homes Regulations and Guide to Quality Standards, within individual homes.



The independent person's report may recommend actions that the Registered Person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. Internal departmental processes are in place for the monitoring of Regulation 44 reports, to ensure action planning is in place. This is a joint process involving undertaken by Registered Person, Service Manager and Responsible Individual to ensure requirements are met.

### 3.4 Ofsted Inspection Judgements

3.5 The Independent persons report aims to support development of service to improve outcomes, whilst informing Ofsted of the progress achieved within the homes. The Independent Persons report contributes to the preparation for the unannounced regulatory inspection by Ofsted which are conducted twice a year.

There are eleven homes in Bradford offering a range of service provision including; emergency, short / medium and long term residential care as well as specialist provisions for children with complex health and disabilities.

All homes have completed their full inspections within the 2016 – 2017 inspection year. Inspection outcomes are positive with one home being judged as Outstanding, eight homes being judged as Good and two homes being judged to Require Improvement. The full inspection outcomes have consistently judged the majority of homes to be good or outstanding despite a change on the CHR and Inspection Framework.

2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017
<b>Inadequate = 0%</b> <b>RI = 0%</b> <b>Good = 73%</b> <b>Outstanding = 27%</b>	<b>Inadequate = 0</b> <b>Requires Improvement=9%</b> <b>Good = 82%</b> <b>Outstanding = 9%</b>	<b>Inadequate = 0%</b> <b>RI = 18%</b> <b>Good = 73%</b> <b>Outstanding = 9%</b>

### 3.6 The role of Elected Members within Regulation 44

3.7 Legislation set out statutory requirements for the roles of responsibilities for the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Looked after Children covering both social care and education. The Leader Members and Corporate Parent have a particular responsibility for vulnerable children who are looked after. Internal processes are in place, which invite Corporate Parents to participate in Regulation 44 visits to children's home. Information is captured to reflect participation.

3.8 Corporate Parenting Councillors must demonstrate that they are interested in and listen to their views and wishes of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. It is important for Corporate Parent to establish good working relationships with staff within the homes and feel confident that the staff will provide an honest view of the service recognising the strengths of the service / home / staff team whilst being confident enough to recognise the areas of development to improve the home / service.

3.9 Corporate Parents have a responsibility to form a judgement of the "Quality of Care" delivered to children based on a range of evidence sources including the views of children in the home. For members undertaking visits to children's homes



(Independent Monitoring Regulation 44 Visits) the role is more extensive, with members being required to be informed of the following:

- Are the right structures and systems in place in order for BMDC to be an effective Corporate Parent and are all the right partners involved?
- Current (and proposed) government expectations regarding the service to looked after children and care leavers
- Know how well BMDC is doing in comparison with other councils and our own past performance
- Know if there sound mechanisms within BMDC for hearing and responding to the views of:
  - looked after children and care leavers
  - parents / carers
- Have a good picture of which needs we are meeting and which we are failing to meet?
- Know if there is an action plan across the council and involving partner agencies the service and to ensure it responds to changing needs?
- Know what our looked after children and care leavers think about the service we are providing.

Processes are in place which supports participation in the monitoring of the children’s homes in line with Regulation 44 and statutory requirements. Overview of participation for the last three year period reflects a picture, which demonstrates there has been some participation in the review of the quality of care by Corporate Parents.

<b>2014 – 2015</b>	<b>2015 – 2016</b>	<b>2016 – 2017</b>
6 visits completed by Corporate Parents	13 visits completed by Corporate Parents	5 visits completed by Corporate Parents  4 visits scheduled January – March 2017

The patterns of participation are seen to be changeable and consideration should be given as to how the visits to the home are completed, to ensure the visits are meaningful and enable Corporate Parents to best exercise their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

#### **4. OPTIONS**

None.

#### **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

None.

#### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 That the Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel agree to participate in three announced monitoring visits of residential and respite homes per year.



## **7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None.

## **9. APPENDICES**

### Appendix 1

- Overview of Inspection outcomes for last three years
- Overview of Corporate Parent participation in Regulation 44 Monitoring of Children's Homes over last three years

